

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 On 15 June 2005, the Senate referred the provisions of the Law and Justice Legislation Amendment (Serious Drug Offences and Other Measures) Bill 2005 (the Bill) to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 9 August 2005. On 9 August 2005, the Senate agreed to extend the reporting date to 15 August 2005.

1.2 The Bill proposes to insert a range of serious drug offences into Chapter 9 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (the Criminal Code), including:

- import and export offences based on existing offences in the *Customs Act 1901* (the Customs Act);
- offences based on Chapter 6 of the Model Criminal Code; and
- new offences, including offences relating to the manufacture or possession of precursor chemicals for the purpose of manufacturing illicit drugs, and to endangering children during the drug manufacturing process.

1.3 The Bill also makes a number of minor amendments to existing offences in the Criminal Code relating to children in armed conflict, and makes some minor amendments to other legislation.

1.4 Chapter 2 provides a more detailed overview of the Bill.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.5 The committee advertised the inquiry in *The Australian* newspaper on 22 June 2005, and invited submissions by 6 July 2005. Details of the inquiry, the Bill and associated documents were placed on the committee's website. The committee also wrote to over 60 organisations and individuals.

1.6 The committee received 13 submissions, and these are listed at Appendix 1. Submissions were placed on the committee's website for ease of access by the public.

1.7 The committee held a public hearing in Canberra on 3 August 2005. A list of witnesses who appeared at the hearing is at Appendix 2 and copies of the Hansard transcript are available through the Internet at <http://aph.gov.au/hansard>.

Acknowledgement

1.8 The committee thanks those organisations and individuals who made submissions and gave evidence at the public hearing.

Note on references

1.9 References in this report are to individual submissions as received by the committee, not to a bound volume. References to the committee Hansard are to the proof Hansard: page numbers may vary between the proof and the official Hansard transcript.